



NEWS RELEASE

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BATTALION PRACTICES CONVOY MISSION

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Staff writer

Soldiers of the 610th Brigade Support Battalion spent 72 hours in the field starting April 19 in their first field training exercise since the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's activation in January.

The goal was to show Soldiers how to provide combat service support from a forward operating base to maneuver battalions using convoys.

The FOB, named Phoenix, was located at the training site near the Outdoor Recreation Center on Rifle Range Road. Two other FOBs, Riley and Geary, were located on the north and west outskirts of Custer Hill.

Soldiers received battle-focused training that would prepare them for future operations, Command Sgt. Maj. Eddie Fields said.

That training included reacting to direct fire when mounted in vehicles, recovering downed equipment and conducting new equipment, resupply and mail convoys.

One convoy was conducted every two hours during the third day of the field training exercise.

The route started at FOB Phoenix, snaked north up 1st Division Road and through training areas northeast of Custer Hill. The convoy then had to wind through the roundabouts on Custer Hill before returning to FOB Phoenix.

While on this route, Soldiers had to react to improvised explosive devices, ambushes with roadblocks and "locals" blocking the road, asking for food.

"When my Soldiers go on convoys, they hope it's boring," said 1st Sgt. Rick Carullo of Company A as he rode in a "Humvee" following a convoy April 20. "When it's not boring, then it's scary."

During that convoy, three "locals" approached the 19-Soldier convoy. The hood of their vehicle was up and it blocked the gravel road. Two women and one man in headscarves approached the weary Soldiers, begging for food and yelling.

The “locals” became confrontational when the Soldiers touched or attempted to detain them.

Amongst the confusion, Soldiers had to decide how to deal with the “locals” while safely maneuvering the convoy’s seven vehicles through the obstacle. After much yelling, the “locals” backed their vehicle up, but only after stealing a box of MREs from a “Humvee” in the convoy.

Staff Sgt. Otto Lerdtadsin led the convoy during this training mission and said, considering 90 percent of the Soldiers were new to this type of training, they reacted well.

The Soldiers are learning, said Capt. Joe Young of Co. A. For their first times in a role-playing scenario, they did well.

“We’re still working on the procedures and what they need to know for handling these types of situations,” he said.

A great deal of time is spent in the planning phase for an operation of this kind, Fields said. Preparations for the field training exercise began in January after the brigade’s activation.